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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

Letter dated 9 November 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you concerning the statement made by the Muslim representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Third Committee on 7 November 1995, under agenda item 109 (see A/C.3/50/SR.20).

In her statement, Mrs. Kalajdzisalihović advanced a series of false allegations, which my Government totally rejects. Instead of focusing to resolve the issue of refugees in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina through the peace settlement, the Muslim representative put emphasis on issues that are not related to the agenda item on refugees, for example, "aggression", "genocide", "International Tribunal", etc. By putting forward a condition like "ensuring that those who have committed the war crimes do not remain in positions of power", the Muslim authorities have demonstrated that the disruption of the peace process is more important to them than real care for the refugees in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mrs. Kalajdzisalihović misleadingly portrays the conflict in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina as an aggression even though many world leaders have admitted and publicly stated that what is at stake is a civil war in which all three constituent peoples of the former Bosnia and Herzegovina take an active part.

The Muslim representative expresses concern about the fate of the "Bosniaks and Croats" from north-western Bosnia. Unfortunately, she does not mention at all the fate of the much higher number of the Serbian population from the regions "liberated" in western Bosnia and Herzegovina, who are the innocent victims of the efficient brutal ethnic cleansing perpetrated by the Muslim and Croat forces. Up to 127,000 Bosnian Serbs fled the terror of war and various

threats and intimidations and came to the Banja Luka region from western Bosnia in mid-September.

She also failed to mention the existence, throughout the civil war in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina, of detention camps for the Bosnian Serbs in the territory under Bosnian Muslim and Croat control as well as the fact that the representatives of the international humanitarian organizations have been denied access to them.

In her statement, Mrs. Kalajdzisalihović underlined that "more than 60 per cent of the original population of Bosnia and Herzegovina" became refugees and displaced persons. However, she did not mention that around 200,000 registered and at least the same number of unregistered Serbian refugees fleeing from the former Bosnia and Herzegovina found shelter in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In most of the cases, they were the victims of the policy and practice of ethnic cleansing instigated and perpetrated by the Muslim and Bosnian Croat authorities. As a matter of fact, the Bosnian Serbs from northern Herzegovina were the first victims of the practice of ethnic cleansing in the civil war in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The problem of refugees and internally displaced persons is a wide one and relates to the whole territory of the former Bosnia and Herzegovina and not only to specific locations. In that respect, the responsibility for the fate of these people lies equally with all the sides in this fratricidal war. One of the goals of the peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, is the achievement of a comprehensive solution to the refugee problem. For that reason, all parties in the talks are expected to facilitate the negotiations and not shift attention to any individual issue.

Pinning the responsibility for the suffering of the population of the former Bosnia and Herzegovina exclusively on the "Pale regime supported by Serbia", as deliberately stated by the Muslim representative, cannot divert the culpability of the Muslim-Croat authorities and free them from their role in starting the civil war, which has unleashed an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy and the continuation of the war option.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 109.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
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